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SUGGESTIONS FOR STUMP REMOVAL

The removal of stumps not only improves the appearance of an area but prevents the development of termites and other insects that attack wood. As an alternative for stump removal, some people have found it desirable to let vegetation such as ivy plants grow over a stump, while others make a rock garden around the stump.¹

Part I. Suggested methods for eliminating stumps: (A) dig or grub them out; (B) let them rot out; and (C) burn them out.

- (A) Dig them out. It is not easy to dig or grub out stumps, even small ones, and the job varies according to size and nature of the root systems. Dig a trench about 2 feet deep around the stump near the point where the roots enter the ground. Sever the roots as closely as possible to the stump, and roll, drag, or slide the stump out of the hole. Tap roots make this job very difficult. A high stump supplies leverage if power is used to pull the stump.
- (B) Let them rot. Stumps can be rotted out by cutting them as near the ground line as practicable, covering them with soil and/or sod, and keeping the stump area moist so that wood-destroying fungi and insects may go to work. Holes bored in the stump will hasten rotting but are not essential. Some woods are more durable than others. Thus, it may take several years or more for a stump to disintegrate. The length of time depends upon size, species, moisture, temperature, and other conditions.
- The rotting of stumps will be hastened by quickly killing the stump to prevent sprouting. (See part II.)
- (C) Burn them out. Burning stumps out is not an easy task, and more research work is needed to answer some of the questions on this method. Since fire is involved, every precaution should be taken to control it within a safe area. Burning should not be attempted on a stump if it is within 10 feet of a building or flammable material. A burning permit from local authorities may be required.

Saltpeter (potassium nitrate) has been used to facilitate burning. Also there are several chemicals on the market which the manufacturers claim will do this. The chemical usually takes several months to diffuse throughout the stump. To get the chemical into the wood bore holes, say an inch in diameter and about 6 to 12 inches deep, spaced about a foot apart on the top. Slanting holes in the sides and top also aid in distributing the chemical but they are not easy to bore. The chemical is placed into these holes and water added from time to time.

¹F. B., 1526 "Clearing Land of Brush and Stumps" for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., at 20 cents per copy, is a 38 page bulletin dealing with land clearing.

Saltpeter should never be tamped into the holes for it is explosive. The holes should be stopped or plugged. It may be desirable to repack the chemical into the holes a second or third time as it dissolves. The stump should be dry before trying to burn. To get the wood to burn freely, pour fuel oil or kerosene on the stump and add some kindling.

A modification of the burning method is to place a metal container (about 5 gallon size) with the top and bottom removed to serve as a stove or burner on top of the stump. Holes should be punched in the side of the container near the bottom for draft. Charcoal or coke as the fuel will furnish a hot fire to get the stump burning. It may be necessary to add fuel from time to time and also change the location of the burner.

Another burning method which has been suggested is the use of a 50-gallon drum, one end open, and upended over the stump. About 6 inches up the side of the drum from the open or bottom end, a 4 by 8 inch opening is made to let in air. A stove pipe equipped with a damper should be installed in the closed or top end of the drum. A small copper tube, fitted with a hand valve is installed about 1 foot above the drum to drip fuel oil or used motor oil from a container. Burning oil, however, creates a smudge which often is objectionable.

Part II. Suggested Methods To Prevent Sprouting:

To prevent sprouting on freshly cut stumps the use of herbicides may be necessary. One suggested treatment is a mixture of equal portions of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, diluted at the rate of 1 quart of combined chemicals to 5 gallons of fuel oil or kerosene. The solution is sprayed or brushed on the top and around the base of the stump up to a height of 15 inches. Crystals of ammonium sulfamate, sold under the trade name of "Ammate," allowed to dissolve on the top of the stump also have proven effective. Herbicide treatment may be applied at any time of the year. Follow the precautions suggested by the manufacturers in handling, storing, and using herbicides.

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